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Section I (Amendments to the Claims)

Please amend claims 22, 31, 40, and 42, and cancel claims 25, 32, and 34 as set out in the following listing of the claims of the application.

1-21. **(Cancelled)**

22. **(Currently amended)** A centrifuge tube having a body with a closed distal end, an open proximal end, and integral hinge elements at opposing sides of the body to facilitate compression flattening of at least a portion of the body, wherein the body has a substantially uniform diameter along the open proximal end, and wherein the body comprises concave depressions on an exterior surface of the tube, opposingly facing one another, between the respective integral hinge elements.

23. **(Previously presented)** The centrifuge tube of claim 22 wherein the body has a central axis extending through the closed distal end and the open proximal end, the body has an average cross-sectional area in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, and the open proximal end has a cross-sectional area at least as large as the average cross-sectional area.

24. **(Previously presented)** The centrifuge tube of claim 22, further comprising a cap matably engageable with coupling structure at the proximal end of the centrifuge tube.

25. **(Cancelled).**

26. **(Previously presented)** The centrifuge tube of claim 22, wherein each of the integral hinge elements comprises any of a ridged structure, a corrugated protrusion structure, and a protrusion of generally triangular cross-section.

27. **(Previously presented)** The centrifuge tube of claim 22, formed by a molding technique selected from the group consisting of extrusion blow molding and rotational molding.

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28. (Previously presented) The centrifuge tube of claim 22, having a generally cylindrical form, an inner diameter of up to about one inch, and a length in a range of from about 3 inches to about 8 inches.

29. (Previously presented) The centrifuge tube of claim 22, formed of a polymer selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, polyvinylchloride, polybutylene and polyurethane.

30. (Withdrawn) A specimen collection kit comprising the centrifuge tube of claim 22, a cap matably engagable with the proximal end of the centrifuge tube, and a swab article having a swab element adapted to collect a specimen and sized such that the swab element may be inserted through the proximal end into an interior portion of the centrifuge tube.

31. (Currently amended) A centrifuge tube having a body with a closed distal end, an open proximal end, and integral hinge elements at opposing sides of the body to facilitate compression flattening of at least a portion of the body, wherein the body has a central axis extending through the closed distal end and the open proximal end, the body has an average cross-sectional area in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, and the open proximal end has a cross-sectional area at least as large as the average cross-sectional area, and the body comprises concave depressions on an exterior surface of the tube, opposedly facing one another, between the respective integral hinge elements.

32. (Cancelled).

33. (Previously presented) The centrifuge tube of claim 31, further comprising a cap matably engageable with coupling structure at the proximal end of the centrifuge tube.

34. (Cancelled).

35. (Previously presented) The centrifuge tube of claim 31 wherein each of the integral hinge elements comprises any of a ridged structure, a corrugated protrusion structure, and a protrusion of generally triangular cross-section.

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36. **(Previously presented)** The centrifuge tube of claim 31, formed by a molding technique selected from the group consisting of extrusion blow molding and rotational molding.

37. **(Previously presented)** The centrifuge tube of claim 31, having a generally cylindrical form, an inner diameter of up to about one inch, and a length in a range of from about 3 inches to, about 8 inches.

38. **(Previously presented)** The centrifuge tube of claim 31, formed of a polymer selected from the group consisting of polypropylene, polyethylene, polyvinylchloride, polybutylene and polyurethane.

39. **(Withdrawn)** A specimen collection kit comprising the centrifuge tube of claim 31, a cap matably engagable with the proximal end of the centrifuge tube, and a swab article having a swab element adapted to collect a specimen and sized such that the swab element may be inserted through the proximal end into an interior portion of the centrifuge tube.

40. **(Withdrawn – currently amended)** An analytical method comprising the steps of:
providing a swab article having a swab element adapted to collect a specimen;
providing a centrifuge tube having a body with a closed distal end, an open proximal end, and a body with integral hinge elements at opposing sides thereof of the body to facilitate compression flattening of at least a portion of the body, wherein the body has a substantially uniform diameter along the open proximal end, and wherein the body comprises concave depressions on an exterior surface of the tube, opposingly facing one another, between the respective integral hinge elements;
contacting a specimen with the swab element;
inserting the swab element through the open proximal end into an interior portion of the centrifuge tube;
compressively flattening at least a portion of the body to contact and compress the swab element to extract at least a portion of the specimen.

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41. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claim 40, further comprising the step of inserting the centrifuge tube into a centrifuge and subjecting the centrifuge tube and its contents to centrifugation.

42. **(Withdrawn – currently amended)** The method of claim 40, wherein ~~the centrifuge tube is characterized by any of: (i) the body having a substantially uniform diameter along the open proximal end; and (ii) the body has having~~ a central axis extending through the closed distal end and the open proximal end, the body has having an average cross-sectional area in a direction perpendicular to the central axis, and the open proximal end has having a cross-sectional area at least as large as the average cross-sectional area.